

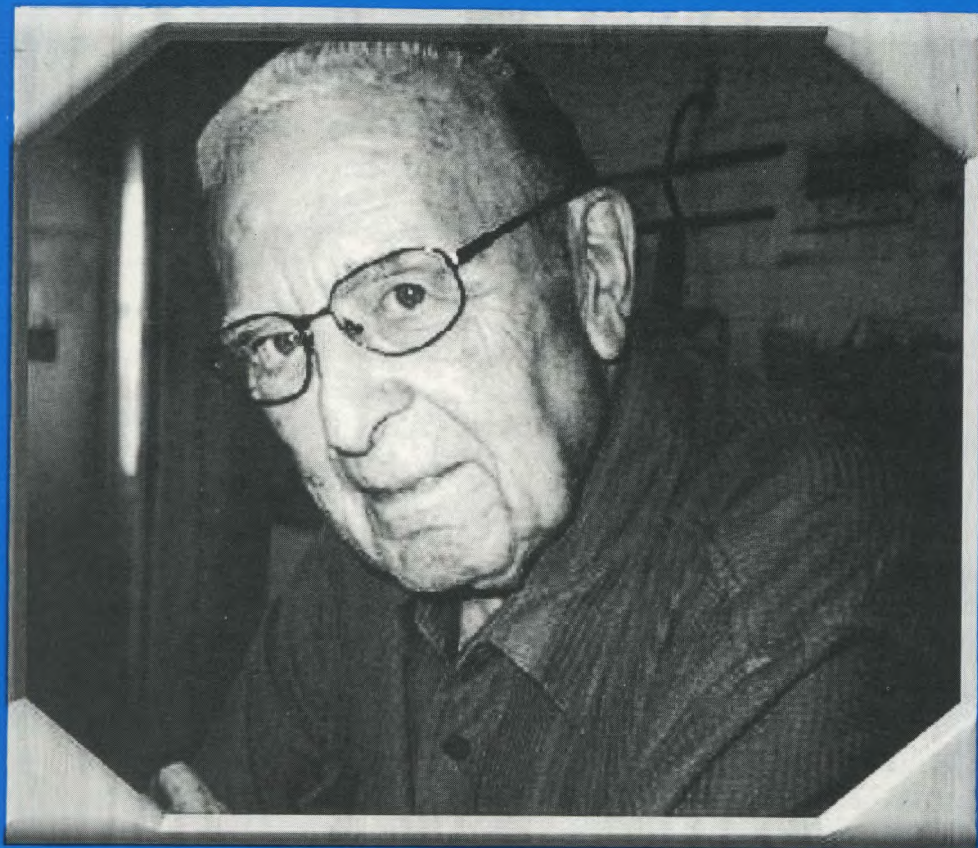
THE 7PWE  
**SHEKEL**



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Moe Weinschel  
1917-2001

# OUR ORGANIZATION

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The American Israel Numismatic Association is a cultural and educational organization dedicated to the study and collection of Israel's coinage, past and present, and all aspects of Judaic numismatics. It is a democratically organized, membership oriented group, chartered as a non-profit association under the laws of The State of New York. The primary purpose is the development of programs, publications, meetings and other activities which will bring news, history, social and related background to the study and collection of Judaic numismatics, and the advancement of the hobby.

The Association sponsors major cultural/social/numismatic events such as national and regional conventions, study tours to Israel, publication of books, and other activities which will be of benefit to the members. Local chapters exist in many areas. Write for further information.

The Association publishes the SHEKEL six times a year. It is a journal and news magazine prepared for the enlightenment and education of the membership and neither solicits nor accepts advertising. All articles published are the views and opinions of the authors and may or may not reflect the views and opinions of A.I.N.A.

## Annual Membership fees:

U.S., Canada and Mexico \$18. - Foreign \$25.- Life \$300.

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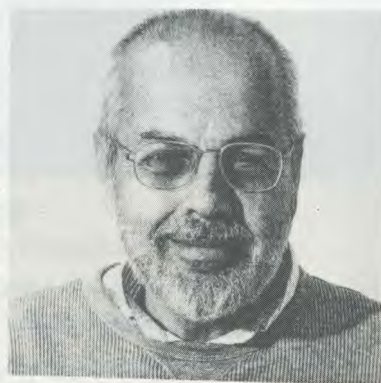
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## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### BY MEL WACKS



Goethe, who owned an impressive group of coins and medals, said "Collectors are happy people." It is my hope that AINA will add to your happiness by alerting you to exciting new issues and edifying you about historic numismatic items of the past.

And our hobby can help people come together. Christians prize the ancient Judaeen coins that played a role in the New Testament - like the Widow's Mite. Moslems can collect coins issued by the Arabs that adopted designs from earlier Jewish coins - such as a pomegranate and menorah. And collectors can acquire medals picturing famous Jewish personalities, synagogues, etc. from around the world. There is something for everyone, as you find out when reading the fascinating stories in every issue of The Shekel magazine.

While AINA is an international organization, I would like every member to know that you are important. If you have any question or comment about our organization or any aspect of collecting coins, medals or paper money you are invited to call me at (818) 225-1348 (please leave message) or e-mail me at [numismel@aol.com](mailto:numismel@aol.com). In addition, I invite you to contact our Program Chairman, Prof. Steve Feller, to request a slide, motion picture or video presentation for your coin club, synagogue or church group, school class, or any other organization. There is no cost ... just call Prof. Feller at (319) 393-7052 or e-mail him at [sfeller@coe.edu](mailto:sfeller@coe.edu) and he will tell you what is available. I hope that you enjoy every issue of The Shekel as much as I do. I salute our editor and invite members to suggest what they would like to read or to contribute articles by writing to Editor Ed Schuman, AINA, 12555 Biscayne Blvd. #733, North Miami, FL 33181 or emailing him at [feathers@bellsouth.net](mailto:feathers@bellsouth.net). If you have not already done so, won't you please mail in your dues to Florence?

Last but not least, I want to say that we all will miss Moe Weinschel's leadership, humor and friendship.

Happy Collecting,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mel". The signature is stylized with a large, looped 'M' and a cursive 'el'.

## A TRIBUTE TO MOE

Moe Weinschel, president of A.I.N.A. passed away on October 16th 2001. Moe was not an original member of the organization but joined shortly after A.I.N.A. was founded. He became Life Member #36. His expertise was first utilized in organizing and operating many of the New York A.I.N.A. sponsored coin conventions that were so popular and profitable in those years. Through Moe, the firm of Stacks was solicited to conduct the rare coin auctions that accompanied the conventions and help secure their success. He was able to meet with coin dealers and collectors from all parts of the country at these conventions and in doing so made hundreds of friends in the numismatic fraternity.

Moe was both a participant as well as the leader of several of the A.I.N.A. study tours to Israel. He had personal contacts with the airline personal that assured the A.I.N.A. group were always in preferred seating. His love for Israel was such that he always looked forward to the next tour. He always maintained personal relations with the Directors and officials of the Israel Government Coins and Medals Corporation that insured close cooperation between the two organizations.

Moe was also a member of the American Numismatic Association, and was recognized for his 50th year membership in Philadelphia. He attended many of their conventions in all parts of the country and served as General Chairman of a past New York convention. He was unanimously nominated along with Julius Turoff at the Atlanta convention last August to serve as Honorary General Chairmen of the 2002 World's Fair of Money in New York City July 31-August 4th 2002.

Moe was honored with an early membership into the *Numismatic Ambassador* fraternity sponsored by the Krause Publications for his time and work in promoting the numismatic hobby. He offered advice, free *samples* and encouragement to many young interested and potential collectors to our hobby. He took an active part in just about every coin club in the Metropolitan New York area which he regularly attended. He was a fixture at the F.U.N. convention in Florida at which he represented A.I.N.A. Moe was also a member and former officer of the Jewish War Veterans.

It has been said that he was a good friend to all he encountered. While he was not a wealthy man, he was a very rich man. His passing will leave a huge gap in many lives, especially in the A.I.N.A. group. Sincere condolences go to his wife Aida, who often worked along side him at the A.I.N.A. and I.G.C.M.C booths at the conventions, and to his family.

# THE CENTRAL SYNAGOGUE

Your editor constantly scans the internet in search for items which could be used in the SHEKEL. A recent "synagogue" listing on the eBay auction web site offered a lucite encased bronze medal. A picture of a synagogue is on the front side of the medal. The back side is plain but contains incused lettering "Central Synagogue July 6, 1872." The challenge was to find the location of the synagogue and thus this story.

There are hundreds of "Central Synagogues" in the world, The largest synagogue in many cities are called Central Synagogue. There are Central Synagogues in London, Bondi Junction in Australia, Chicago, Munich, Vienna to name just a few cities. But the date July 6, 1872 and the picture of the synagogue confirm that this medal is of the Central Synagogue in New York City.

The building, at Lexington Ave and 55th Street is a memorial to Dr. Isaac Mayer Wise who became closely connected with the Ahawath Chesed Congregation, which since 1872 has occupied the Central Synagogue. Dr. Wise dedicated the congregation's first building on Fourth Street and Ave C in 1864, and laid the cornerstone of the present structure in 1870. His son, Dr. Jonah B. Wise became the congregation's rabbi in 1926. It is the oldest synagogue in continual usage in New York City.

Architect Henry Fernbach designed the building's style in Moorish Islamic Revival. Jewish communities had been unable to develop a tradition of synagogue architecture due to persecution in Europe. After the emancipation of Jews in Europe, and the growth of large Jewish communities in America, it was possible to erect major worship buildings. Classical style buildings called upon pagan Greco-Roman themes that were considered unsuitable for a Jewish worship. Gothic style so dominant among Christians was equally unsuitable. The relatively tolerant climate of Medieval Spain had been a golden age of Jewish culture, and it was believed that Muslim architecture had incorporated aspects of Jewish religious architecture. Thus the occurrence of Jewish congregations adopting the styles of Muslim Spain and the golden age of Sephardic Jewry came to be.

The Central Synagogue building is dominated with two octagonal towers rising 122 feet. They are meant to be reminiscences of Solomon's Temple. The towers are topped with onion-shaped, green copper domes. There is one large rose window accompanied by many smaller arched

windows. The interior contains beautifully stenciled designs in colors of red, blue, and ochre. Cast iron columns divide the interior into three sections.

New York's Central Synagogue, one of the nation's leading Reform congregations, plays an important role in the civic and cultural life of New York, offering worship services, life-long education, and programs which help the greater community. The Sanctuary building has been dedicated both a National and New York City historic landmark. Following a devastating fire in August 1998, it has been restored to honor its historic character, while looking to the future. The people of Central are committed to applying the values of our heritage to the important issues of the day.

For those interested in the cost of the medal, we purchased it for \$3.50, but the shipping costs were higher than the purchase price.



## JEWISH-AMERICAN HALL OF FAME HONORS BESS MYERSON

Bess Myerson was the first (and, so far, only) Jewish Miss America. She went on to become a popular television personality, a public servant, and a philanthropist. However, "it is Ms. Myerson's tireless fight against bigotry and behalf of tolerance that is her crowning achievement."

Bess encountered anti-Semitism during the Miss America Pageant, when an official tried to convince her to change her name to one that was less ethnic suggesting Betty Merrick. Bess refused. The dark haired statuesque (she was the tallest contestant at 5' 10") beauty was the first recipient of a scholarship, but none of the pageant's sponsors - including Catalina Swimsuits - chose to use the Jewish beauty from the Bronx as a spokesperson. During her year as Miss America, Ms. Myerson made many personal appearances. One of these was scheduled at an ante-bellum country club, but just before the event she was told that there had been a terrible mistake, the country club was restricted, and no Jewish person could possibly be welcomed there.

Bess Myerson, determined to fight racial bigotry, traveled around the country speaking in behalf of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, in cooperation with the NAACP and the Urban League. A quote from her first speech, that is just as timely today as when it was made nearly a half century ago, is featured on the medal issued by the Jewish-American Hall of Fame. *"There can be no place for prejudice in our nation or in our hearts."*

Many Americans remember Ms. Myerson as Mistress of Ceremonies for "The Big Payoff" (1951-9) and as a panelist on "I've Got A Secret" (1958-67). From 1969-73 as Commissioner of Consumer Affairs of New York City, Myerson was architect of the most far-reaching consumer protection legislation in the country at that time - and was featured on the cover of Life Magazine as "A Consumer's Best Friend." And from 1983-7 she served under Mayor Ed Koch as Commissioner of Cultural Affairs, where Bess substantially broadened financial support for New York City's art community.

Ms. Myerson is a Founder of The Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York, where she established the Bess Myerson Film and Video Collection with a grant of over a million dollars. She has also made six-figure contributions to The Guild for the Blind, Hebrew University (for Cancer Research), and SHARE (to launch an Ovarian Cancer Program).

Her concern over the rising racial and religious tensions on college campuses led Bess to endow the Bess Myerson Campus Journalism Awards given annually by the Anti-Defamation League.

Bess Myerson's presidential appointments include Lyndon Johnson's White House Conference on Violence and Crime, Gerald Ford's Commission on the National Center for Productivity and Quality of Working Life, and Jimmy Carter's Commissions on Mental Health and on World Hunger. And she has served on the boards of the International Rescue Committee, the Consumers Union, Another Mother for Peace, etc. Hunter College, where she graduated with a music degree in the same year that she was crowned Miss America, later presented Ms. Myerson with an honorary doctorate, as did Long Island University and Seton Hall. And she shows no signs of slowing down at the age of 77.

The Bess Myerson medals, created by award winning sculptor Alex Shagin, are available in limited editions of 999 bronze, 499 pure silver and 49 10 kt gold for contributions of \$29.50, \$85 and \$995 respectively. The gold medals have a genuine diamond mounted in Miss America's scepter! These individually serial numbered medals are over 2 inches in diameter, and weigh about 2 oz. each.

**A.I.N.A. members can take 10% discount off the published prices.** Please add 4.50 per medal for postage. Orders can be sent to A.I.N.A. 12555 Biscayne Blvd. #733, North Miami, FL 33181.

Information about past Jewish-American Hall of Fame honorees - including Albert Einstein, Benny Goodman, Hank Greenberg, Golda Meir, and Jonas Salk can be found on web site <http://www.amuseum.org/jahf>.



# **Free AINA Token is First in Series Picturing "Historic Coins"**

by Mel Wacks



The American Israel Numismatic Association issued its first membership token in 1973, and every year since a new token has been given free to each member. The 2002 token is the first ever to feature a coin -- a shekel issued in the first year (66/67 CE) of the First Revolt. It is planned to picture other important Judaean and Biblical coins in future years, so that collectors can assemble an historic collection absolutely free.

The last Roman Procurator (Governor) of Judaea was Gessius Florus (64-66 CE), who was at the same time also the worst. Emil Scharer ("The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus") writes about Florus, "the robbing of individuals seemed to him quite too small. He plundered whole cities and ruined whole communities. If only the robbers would share their spoil with him, they would be allowed to carry on their operations unchecked."

However, it was not until Florus plundered the Temple Treasury of 17 talents (51,000 shekels) that the people revolted. It started off on a somewhat humorous note when a couple of sarcastic wits sent around baskets to collect contributions for the "poor" Florus. But there was nothing funny about the long five year war that followed, that cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of Jews and Romans.

One of the first acts of the revolutionaries was probably the striking of silver coins - shekels and half shekels. While Antiochus VII, King of Syria, has given Simon Maccabeus "leave to coin money for thy country with thine own stamp" in 139/138 BCE, evidently no coins were struck before Antiochus broke "all the covenants which he had made with him" shortly after he had conceded the privilege. Since the Syrians and Romans, who controlled Judaea afterwards, jealously guarded the right to mint silver coins, there had been no other opportunity for the Jewish nation to strike such coins until the First Revolt.

Thus Judaea's most famous coins were issued. The shekel featured what is most probably a chalice on the obverse, with the initial letter of the Hebrew alphabet (aleph) above indicating the first year of the revolt; the surrounding inscription reads "Shekel of Israel."

The 2002 AINA token was designed by Mel Wacks. It pictures an adaptation of a woodcut by F. W. Fairholt that appeared in Frederic Madden's "History of Jewish Coinage" (1864).

# THE JUDEAN PRUTOT MINTED UNDER TIBERIUS

by Ken Baumheckel

## INTRODUCTION

There is a curious pattern in the bronze prutot minted by the Judean procurators under Tiberius. The three procurators under Augustus had contented themselves with one coin type: palm tree on one side, barley ear on the other. But in the second year of Tiberius' reign, the Judean procurator Valerius Gratus mothballed this type and issued not one but two new types of prutot. Granted, a new administration is entitled to a bit of fanfare, so maybe we can forgive Gratus for a little creative indulgence. But the following year, Gratus scrapped his new designs and started afresh, again issuing two. Now we start to wonder what was going on. Why did Gratus see a need to issue two concurrent types in Tiberius' second year, then two completely remodeled types in year three?

If we look for clues in the devices exhibited on these four coins, we gain no help in discovering an answer. The artwork does not commemorate any special events that might have taken place during those years; it's just the typical Judean fare. A double cornucopia. A palm leaf. Another double cornucopia, this time with a caduceus between. Three blooming lillies. What gives?

The mystery clears up with a look at the inscriptions, for in both of these early years, the emperor Tiberius and his mother Julia Livia were honored on one coin each.

Gratus issued three prutah types in Tiberius' fourth year. Again there's a coin for Tiberius (with a vine leaf on a branch on one side and a kantharos with scroll handles on the other), a coin for Livia (vine leaf and branch plus a cluster of grapes, scroll handles again but this time on a narrow-necked amphora), and for the first time, we have a coin which honors both (TIB KAI CAR in three lines within a wreath on the obverse, and IOY / (palm leaf) / LIA on the reverse). Gratus seems to have been happy with this latest edition. He left this new type unchanged when he again deemed it necessary to issue coinage during Tiberius' fifth and eleventh years.

Recapping our inspection of the inscriptions, we have two findings: first, it does appear that a desire on the part of Gratus to honor both Tiberius and his mother was indeed what drove his production of two concurrent types during Tiberius' 2nd, 3rd, and 4th years; and second, the innovation of a single type featuring both names ended this practice.

Gratus' eagerness to demonstrate a loyal enthusiasm for the royal family by this parade of coin types was nothing unusual when viewed against the activities of the neighboring provinces and in Italy itself. All were competing to heap upon Tiberius and Livia honors, titles, and much more. Herod Philip, who ruled the area to the north and east of the sea of Galilee, issued a coin displaying a bust of Tiberius (H.542) and two coins featuring portraits of Livia, one under Augustus (H.530) and another under Tiberius (H.540). (Incidentally, Philip's coins with portraits, which also included three of Augustus and one of himself, were minted for an area in which the Jewish proportion of the population was relatively minor, and so they likely did not cause much of a stir).

Robin Seager details several of the honors that Tiberius and Livia received from diverse sources (pp. 142-147). In Etruria special sacrifices were offered on Augustus', Tiberius' and Livia's birthdays. Asculum installed a priest of Augustus and Tiberius. Vienna had an altar to Augustus and Tiberius. Cyrene rededicated its restored strategion to Tiberius. There was a priest of Tiberius at Nysa, another priest and an altar of Tiberius at Thera, a priest and a temple at Lapethus in Cyprus.

Both of Herod's sons who still governed as princes in Palestine under Tiberius renamed cities after Julia Livia. (Ben-Sasson, pp. 253-254; Grant, p. 102) Soon after coming to power in 4 BCE, Herod Antipas (Tetrach of Galilee) restored Beth-haramata in Trans-Jordan (Peraea) and renamed it Livias, after Livia, who prior to being the mother of Tiberius had her first fame as the wife of Emperor Augustus. When she later changed her name to Julia Augusta, Antipas noted this by changing the city's name to Julias. A second city also saw its name changed to Julias. This was Bethsaida, a city just north of the Sea of Galilee, in the territory under the administration of Antipas' brother Philip. Antipas also saw to honoring Tiberius by founding Tiberias between the years 17 and 22, a city which endures under the name he gave it to this day. (Ben-Sasson, p. 253).

The honors Livia received were truly extensive. Seager notes that a statue of Livia was dedicated alongside one of Tiberius at Cumae, and that she received divine honors at Athens as Pronoia and Boulaea, as Vesta and the new Demeter at Lampsacus, as Diana Pacilucifera at Corinth, as Ceres at Gaulus, and as mother of the world in Spain. (p. 145) Moreover, Livia had her own priests or priestesses at Atina, Salonae, and Vasio.

The other procurator to rule Judea under Tiberius is the infamous Pontius Pilate. Pilate only issued two Prutah types: one in Tiberius' sixteenth year, a second in the two succeeding years. As was the case with Gratus, so again with Pilate we see the Prutah being used for the political purpose of giving the imperial family honorable press.

When Pilate issued coinage in Tiberius' sixteenth year, he carried forward the convention begun by his predecessor and issued a prutah mentioning Tiberius on one side and Livia on the other. That was the year Livia died, so when Pilate issued coinage in the following year, he had to issue a new type devoid of Livia's name. He reissued this Livia-free type in Tiberius' eighteenth year (the final year of prutah issues during Tiberius' tenure).

## **HISTORY**

To understand the role the procurators played in Judea in relation to the Roman occupation of Palestine and dominance of the Jewish people, it will be helpful to review briefly the political history of Judea which immediately preceded the time of the procurators. The politically autonomous entity established by the Maccabees in the second century BCE consolidated its power under the Hellenized Hasmonean monarchy, but this monarchy soon developed a breach with the religiously conservative Pharisees. (Barnavi, p. 46) Hasmonean rule was further weakened by internecine struggles, then came to an end with Pompey's conquest and annexation of Judea in 63. Between this independence under the Hasmoneans and the direct Roman rule via the non-Jewish procurators, there was a transitional period of rule by an Idumean family with a professed Jewish faith, but whose religion was always secondary to an unflinching loyalty to Rome's interests. (Grant, pp. 49-82)

## **HEROD**

Herod the Great (37 - 4 BCE) was the key figure in the Idumean dynasty. His ousting of the Hasmoneans, cruel political purges, and intimidation of the Sanhedrin made him unpopular to the Jews, but this was not a serious concern to Rome so long as this dissatisfaction did not erupt into open revolt. He exercised a free hand in ruling his subjects, but always understood that if the people lost patience with him and revolted against him, all the prestige he had garnered through his extensive architectural achievements (which were many and extended far beyond the borders of his kingdom) would be instantly lost. (Ben-Sasson, p. 241)

At least once Herod came quite close to inciting just this: the revolt that would have spelled the end of his career. Knowing that the Jews tolerated no images, and knowing too how they disliked being reminded of their subjugation to Rome, he nevertheless placed a huge Roman eagle over the most important gate of the Temple.

“A group of young men gathered before the gate on which the golden eagle was set and began to pull it down. The soldiers interfered and arrested about forty of them. Herod was so enraged at this sign of insubordination and insult to Rome, that he had the ‘rebels’ burned alive.” (Grayzel, p. 102) This same temple Herod was in the process of making costly renovation and expansion to. It was hard for Jews not to feel gratitude for the upgrades to their temple. (Grayzel, p. 102) Although on balance Herod was not popular with most of the

Jewish population, he had a few points in his favor; the work on the temple was one of them. Herod helped settle Jews from the Diaspora (and especially from Babylonia) within the country, and these Jews were grateful to Herod for this help. He also made an effort of sorts to follow Jewish law, as for example when he was asked to give his sister to a Nabatean nobleman in marriage and stipulated as a condition that this man first convert to Judaism. (Ben-Sasson, p. 244)

Like the procurators who were to follow him a few years after his death, Herod was prompt and efficient in delivering the requisite revenue to Rome. The Roman concept of a good provincial prince was someone who managed to collect revenue, keep the peace, and promote the image of Roman dominance. Part of this Roman hegemony was the cult of the emperor. This was “the spiritual means by which Augustus bound the upper classes of the provinces and of Rome to support his rule.” (Starr, p. 557) This pattern of enthusiastic praise for the ruler would continue through Tiberius’ reign and right up to the end of the empire. It was Roman policy to require subject peoples to add to whatever other religious cults they had a new cult of sacrificing to the emperor and other Roman gods. In other provinces worship of the emperor’s statue was required, but Augustus had understood the Jews enough to realize that an exception

### Coins of Herod Philip



*Three coins issued by Herod Philip: Conjoined heads of Tiberius & Livia/Temple. Undated, Hendin-530; Draped bust of Livia/Hand holding three ears of grain. Year 34 (30/31 CE), Hendin-540; Laureate head of Tiberius/Temple. Year 37 (33/34 CE), Hendin-542. Mint of Caesarea Panias for all three. All photos courtesy of David Hendin, from his reference Guide to Biblical Coins, 4th Edition*

would have to be made in their case, so he allowed them to sacrifice for the emperor in their holy sanctuary rather than to him. (Grant, p. 79) He also decreed that synagogues were inviolable and that Jews were exempt from appearing in court on the Sabbath. (Hadas, p. 126)

Upon Herod's death in 4 BCE, Augustus divided Judea into three unequal parts and put Herod's three sons over them. He assigned the mountainous northeastern section to Philip, Galilee and Peraea (Trans-Jordan) to Antipas, and the most populous southern section "Judea" to Archelaus. In 6 CE Augustus removed Archelaus from his post and converted Judea into a Roman province. Provinces not requiring large military forces were generally entrusted to the direct administration of the Senate.

### The PrutahTypes of Valerius Gratus



H.-639



Year 2



H.-640



H.-641



Year 3



H.-642



H.-643



Year 4



H.-644



H.-645



*All line drawings courtesy of David Hendin,  
from his reference Guide to Biblical Coins, 4th Edition*

A strategically important province, such as Syria, which was responsible for defense against Parthia and hosted large numbers of Roman-citizen legionaries, was reserved for the cream of Roman aristocracy: a governor of senatorial rank. But thinking a garrison of non-citizen auxiliaries sufficient to assure internal security in Judea, Augustus decided it would

have a governor of equestrian rank. (Ben-Sasson, pp. 246-247) Thus the prestige of a Judean procurator was immeasurably inferior to that of the senatorially ranked Syrian governor. He was in practice (e.g., in case of insurrection) dependent upon the assistance of the Syrian governor for military assistance, and intervention in Judean affairs by Syrian governors was frequent. It was the Syrian governor and not the new Judean procurator, for example, who organized the confiscation of Herod Archelaus' property at the dawn of the direct-rule period. (Grant, p. 89) The procurators ruled not from Jerusalem, the center of Jewish religious sentiment and sometime fanaticism, but had their governmental residence and military headquarters in the Hellenistic Caesarea.

## THE FIRST PROCURATORS

The first three procurators of Judaea were appointments of Augustus and stayed in office for three years each: Coponius, 6-9 C.E.; Marcus Ambibulus, 9-12 C.E.; and Annius Rufus, 12-15 C.E. The next two procurators were Valerius Gratus, who remained in office for 11 years (15-26 C.E.) and Pontius Pilate who held it for ten (26-36 C.E.). During Rufus' term of office, Tiberius succeeded Augustus, and Tiberius was a man who liked his governors to retain their posts for an extended time.

Little record has survived of the Gratus administration. The coins he minted do not bear designs that would have agitated the Jews, but Michael Grant points to the fact that his three appointments to the office of High Priest all had extremely short tenures as an indication that things were not going altogether smoothly. (p. 95)

But Pilate is another story. (Grant, pp. 99-102) In addition to his infamy in sentencing Jesus of Nazareth to his cruel death, Pilate managed to grate against his subjects in sundry ways. A prime example of his insensitivity is the offensive symbols of the Roman religion with

### The Prutah Types of Pontius Pilate



Year 16,  
H.-648



Year 17,  
H.-649

*Line drawings courtesy of David Hendin,  
from his reference Guide to Biblical Coins, 4th Edition*

which he chose to adorn his coins: the simpulum, a libation ladle, and the lituus, an augur's staff. One question I have for others who may read this article is whether any of these coins have turned up that show evidence of having been deliberately defaced, as these images would certainly have been detested by the very persons among whom they circulated!

One of Pilate's blunders recalls Herod's mounting of the eagle above the temple gate. Josephus (Antiquities of the Jews XVIII, pp. 55-56) records that one year when Pilate brought his army to their winter quarters, he had them bring with them into Jerusalem the standards they had which bore medallions with the portrait of Tiberius. He caught the Jews off guard by timing their entry into the city at night. The Jews demonstrated en-masse in Jerusalem and even took their protest to his doorstep in Caesarea. After attempting to intimidate the Jews with troops, Pilate relented and removed the standards. Some time later, he decided to build an aqueduct to bring more water into Jerusalem. For this purpose, Pilate decided to use the money from the temple treasury rather than money raised by taxation. As Pilate surely knew, to the Jews, the treasury of the temple was sacred. They gathered in crowds and voiced loud protests. Pilate sent soldiers disguised in civilian dress to mingle with the crowd. At a given signal they fell upon the multitude and clubbed many of them to death.

In a third faux pas, Pilate brought shields into Jerusalem and set them up in the Palace of Herod. These shields bore no image of the emperor, yet no less than four sons of Herod led a delegation to protest this grievous offence. What was on the shield was a dedicatory inscription that no doubt titled Tiberius (as was customary), "the son of the Divine Augustus." (Upon his death Augustus had been made a god by the Roman senate, just as Julius Caesar had been elevated to deity before him and Tiberius would be after him. And as noted above, Tiberius already had temples wherein he was worshipped). The Jews had poured forth much sweat and blood to keep the cult of the emperor from desecrating their city, and they knew a compromise when they saw one.

The final incident and the one which brought about Pilate's recall involved not Jews but Samaritans. The Samaritans held many views and practices at variance with the Jews, who still resented them for having backed the Seleucids in the Maccabean war. One of their beliefs was that some long lost vessels of the Temple would one day be rediscovered by a Levitical prophet. A man appeared in 36 C.E. who gathered a huge crowd, telling them to follow him up their sacred mountain (Gerizim), where he would reveal the vessels. The large military force that Pilate sent to block their way killed some Samaritans and arrested others for subsequent execution. A delegation of Samaritans successfully petitioned Vitellius, then governor of Syria, to have Pilate sent to Rome for trial, and Tiberius subsequently banished him to Gaul.

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# THE JEWISH CATACOMBS OF ANCIENT ROME

By Marvin Tameanko

One of the best kept secrets about the antiquities in Rome is that there are ancient Jewish catacombs in the city. In fact, there are three large, underground Jewish burial complexes, mixed in with the 42 Christian and pagan catacombs, located outside the walls of old Rome. The Jewish catacombs are named the Vigna Randanini, located off the Via Appia Antica, the Villa Torlonia, on the Via Nomentana, and the Monte Verdi, in the Trastevere area, the old Jewish quarter across the Tiber river. These catacombs are presently closed to the public, as are most of the others, but can be viewed by appointment, made with the Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology at 1 Via Napoleon III.

There may be more Jewish catacombs which have yet to be discovered but the three we know about are extensive. Catacombs are a maze of underground tunnels and burial chambers cut into the soft native limestone of the city. The Jewish catacombs were first discovered in 1859 and the labyrinthine structures appear to date from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century to the 6<sup>th</sup> AD. The burials are mainly of two types, that is graves, called 'formae', dug into the floors and covered with paving stones, or crypts, 'loculi', cut into the sidewalls and closed in with bricks or stone. Catacombs for Jews are not unique to Rome; others have been found in Beth Shearim in Israel, and also in Carthage, Malta and Sardinia. The Romans usually cremated their dead but Jews and Christians, because of religious principles, practiced inhumation. Contrary to popular belief and Hollywood movies, the catacombs were not secret hiding places and churches used by early Christians or escaped slaves. Large burial societies for the catacombs, consisting of diggers, undertakers, artists, carvers, janitors and guards, openly advertised their operations and services in ancient Rome. The Jewish tombs are small compared to the Christian catacombs but they provide an important insight into Jewish life, and death, in the middle centuries of Rome. Furthermore, the designs incorporated into the inscriptions on many Jewish tombs authenticate the symbolism that appeared on the Jewish coins struck in the previous centuries.

Only some of the graves in the Jewish catacombs are marked with inscriptions. Many of the Christian tombs display very elaborate art work or pictures, usually depicting Old and New testament scenes, but the Jews used mostly religious symbols in their memorials. This minimal use of art was not done in compliance with the Second Commandment, prohibiting

graven images, but rather it was an attempt at simplicity and dignity. Jewish burial ceremonies placed no emphasis on glorifying the dead person's life and deeds in order to prevent them from becoming revered, as was often done in pagan practices. Most of the Jewish graves do not have inscriptions but those that do usually give only the name and status of the departed one, but in Greek not Latin. The Greek phrase meaning "In Peace You Sleep", appears in several inscriptions. It was perhaps taken from the Hebrew words of Psalms 4.8 - "When I lie down, I go to sleep in peace. You alone, O Lord, keep me perfectly safe". The most common works of art on the Jewish grave stones are engravings of the menorah, a two-handled jug of oil or wine, the etrog, and the shofar. Antiquarians originally identified this horn as a cornucopia, the horn of plenty, but Jews immediately recognized it as the shofar, a ram's horn used as a trumpet. The menorahs found engraved in the Catacombs are the typical Roman/Jewish type of candelabrum with a base or three pronged feet. In style, they closely resemble the menorah carried by Roman soldiers as spoils from the temple in Jerusalem, depicted on the inside sculptural panel of the Arch of Titus, still standing in Rome.



The panel inside the Arch of Titus showing the spoils taken from the Temple of Jerusalem.

To the Romans, the menorah, trumpets and table of the showbread were the ultimate symbols of the Judaeen nation. The arch was built in circa AD 85.

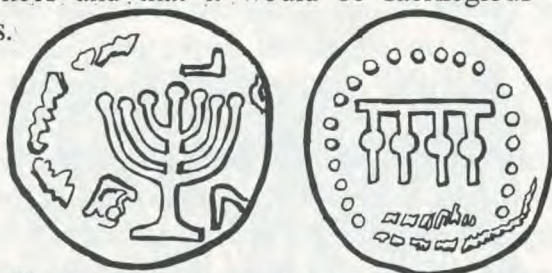
To the Jews, the menorah was a symbol of God and "his streaming Light and Law". It later also came to represent the Tree of Life and the great and gentle, 'mediating female' in the family, the Mother. Presumably for this reason, Jewish women are responsible for lighting the menorah just as they tended the fire in ancient homes. Through common use, the menorah became the ancient emblem, par excellence, of Judaism. It took the prime place in Jewish symbolism occupied today by the six-pointed, Star of David. The 'Magen David' came into use in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and only became popular when the Zionist movement adopted it as their insignia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The menorah was used in ancient

Jewish/Roman inscriptions to signify immortality and as such it was the most relevant symbol on tombstones.<sup>1</sup> For example, an inscription in the Jewish catacombs, commemorating Judas, a priest (rabbi) features a large central menorah, flanked by a jug and an etrog.

A tomb inscription in the Roman catacombs identifying the burial place of "Judas, the priest". The menorah, etrog and oil or wine jug are incorporated into the legend.



The menorah was so potent that it is one of the few symbols used on ancient coinage to express religious nationalism. The small bronze coins struck by Mattathias Antigonus (Mattatayah), 40-37 BC, the last Hasmonean king, are actually propaganda pieces struck to arouse the religious feelings of Judaeans and to enlist them in the war against Herod I. This is the only ancient Jewish coin to use the menorah as part of its design, perhaps indicating that the symbol was reserved for only the most important experiences and that it would be sacrilegious to use it for mundane purposes.



A bronze coin, 14 millimeters in diameter, struck for Mattathias Antigonus, 40-37 BC, showing the menorah on one side and the table of the Showbread on the other. *Guide to Biblical Coins* by David Hendin, 38. (Cited as Hendin, 38)

It is interesting that the symbols, such as the menorah, and the Greek inscriptions in these Roman catacombs, closely resemble the types used in the catacombs at Beth Shearim in Israel. This may suggest that there was a direct communication of culture, customs and religious rites between Judaea and the diaspora during those years. This may be typified by one of the tomb stones in Beth She'arim, an unadorned marble slab, inscribed with the words, "The Tomb of Marinos and Justa his Wife". The names Marinos and Justa were commonly used by the Jews of that century. Appearing at the top of the stone are a Roman type incense shovel or pan, and the etrog, shofar and menorah, all very similar to those used in the Roman catacombs.<sup>2</sup>

A tomb stone from the Beth She'arim catacombs with a Greek inscription and the common symbols of the menorah, etrog and shofar and an incense shovel.



To many Jews today, the shofar is a primitive musical instrument used in the synagogue during the High Holidays. However, in Roman days the shofar was a powerful symbol of Judaism. It represented sanctity and, by legend, would be the horn blown to proclaim the coming of the Messiah and the Judgement Day. Being the horn of a ram, it was also connected to the aborted sacrifice of Isaac when Abraham substituted a ram for his son and, by association with this biblical event, the shofar came to signify God's mercy and the virtuous acts of our forefathers. As well, it appears that in Rome, the Greek word, 'Salpingos' for a trumpet (shofar) was used as a proper name for Jewish males in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. An inscription on a tomb in the catacombs records simply, "Salpingius, infant".<sup>3</sup> This name, a Roman version of the Greek word for a Shofar, may have been given to a baby who died at birth, or soon after, as a heart rendering attempt by his parents to guarantee him a place in heaven on Judgement Day when all the shofars would be present. The shofar was used for many events in Israel, to announce the Sabbath, the holidays, the new moon, and for the beginning or ending of wars. In later years, it was supplemented in some ceremonies by the silver trumpets introduced into the Temple services in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. These trumpets are shown on some of the Jewish coins of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD but the older, ram's horn shofar appeared only on tombstones. The trumpets can also be seen on the frieze in the Arch of Titus, illustrated above, commemorating the triumph of Vespasian and Titus over Israel in AD 70.



A silver coin struck by the Judaeans during the Bar Kochba Revolt. AD 132-135, showing the silver trumpets employed in the Temple to replace or supplement the ram's horn shofar. The obverse shows a bunch of grapes on a vine. Hendin, 171.

Broken vessels made of 'Gold Glass' were frequently found in the Jewish catacombs. These are very fine, thin Roman blue glass cups and bowls with symbols and inscriptions applied in gold leaf as part of the designs. The glasses are always found broken and may have been used for a final libation to the dead and then broken, or they may have been empty and broken as a sign of finality. It is also possible that these artifacts were intact when deposited but broken by grave robbers when they ransacked the tombs. Some of these catacomb Gold Glasses were the finest examples of contemporary Roman art. One simple type of glass bowl recovered from the catacombs displayed the shofar in gold as the dominant element on its bottom. It is accompanied by two etrogs with leaves. Other glasses found in or near tombs show the lions of Judah, Torah arks, menorah, palm fronds and oil or wine jugs. Some are inscribed with happy, dedication messages around their edges, indicating that they were not made specifically as grave goods.

The bottom of a broken Gold Glass found in the Jewish Catacombs. It dates to the 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> century and shows the shofar surrounded by the leaves and perhaps etrogs. Illustrated in the 'Encyclopedic Dictionary of Judaica', page 116b.



The etrog or citron is a fascinating, oriental fruit. Originating in the far east this citron was used as food, as a medicine and for its fragrance as a perfume. Because of these properties and its beautiful appearance, Rabbinic authorities adopted it into the religious services for Succoth (the Feast of Tabernacles), to represent the "fruit of goodly trees" as prescribed in Leviticus, 23: 40.<sup>4</sup> In the Succoth rituals, the etrog was used along with the lulav, the wand made up of the other three required plant species, the palm, willow and myrtle (laurel). The etrog, from its use in the rites of this harvest, 'Rain and Light' festival, came to represent justice as the 'Light of God' given to men. From this concept, the citron was engraved on the tombstones in the catacombs to symbolize protection from evil and an advance to immortality. The etrog is also shown on Jewish coins struck during the First Revolt against Rome, AD 66 -70, to express the similar meanings of justice and religious devotion.

The etrog featured as the principal element on coins struck by the Judaeans, AD 66-70. The reverse shows two elaborate lulavs. Hendin 129.



The image of the jug of oil or wine is often used in the burial inscriptions in the catacombs. The examples seen in the inscriptions of Judas the priest and Marinos and Justa, illustrated above, are good examples. Also, in the catacombs at Beth She'arim in Israel many broken clay jugs were found in or besides the graves. These were assumed to have held olive oil used to cleanse or anoint the corpse. In pagan mythology, such vessels were originally connected to the rites of the Greek god, Dionysus, a fertility deity associated with the olive tree and the vine, along with the food products produced by these plants. To ancient Jews, wine and oil represented the benefits of nature provided by God. Wine was used for sanctification and oil for sacrifices. Both were probably used in the Jewish burial ceremonies and Proverbs 31: 6 mentions that wine should be offered to those who are "bitter of soul", presumably mourners. This two handled jug of oil or wine (amphora), representing God's benevolence, is also used on many ancient Jewish coins struck during the First Revolt against Rome.



A bronze coin struck in Judaea during the First Revolt, AD 66-70, showing a jug of wine or oil. The reverse depicts a vine leaf. Hendin, 123. See also Hendin, 108, 109, 134, 135, 136.

Jewish people today are well known for their joyful celebration of 'Life', and their religious symbols usually reflect life-giving and sustaining forces. This was equally true in Roman times. Death was a tragedy but, judging from the catacombs in Rome, it must have been mourned and commemorated with life-affirming emblems such as the menorah, etrog, jug of wine and the shofar. After all, it is an ancient and traditional Jewish belief that, - "to make an end is also to make a beginning".

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<sup>2</sup> *Beth She'arim, Vol. II, the Greek Inscriptions* by M. Schwabe and B. Lifshitz, Rutgers University Press, 1974, page 133.

<sup>3</sup> *Jewish Symbols*, as above, page 83

<sup>4</sup> *Jewish Book of Why, Vol I*, by A.J. Kolatch, Jonathan David Publications, New York, 1981, page 250

# STREET PEDDLER TO TYCOON THE STORY OF LEON BLUM

**By Jerry Adams**

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When researching the history of early American business tokens I am always amazed at how many of these tokens were issued by men who came to this land in poverty, worked hard and ended up as a man of property and wealth. In the process, many of these pioneer immigrants left their names on buildings and towns across the American frontier. This is the story of one such man, and his success in the land of liberty and free enterprise. Such is the story of the firm of Leon & H. Blum, large wholesalers of merchandise in Galveston, Texas in the 1870's.

In the town of Gunderscholffer, province of Alsace, France a successful Jewish businessman named Isaac Blum and his wife Julie became the parents of Leon Blum in 1836. Leon had an older brother named Alexander, and another brother named Sylvain. Leon attended the Ecole de Travail at Strasburg for several years, where he studied and apprenticed as a tinsmith. Leon's older brother Alexander immigrated to America, and settled in St. Landry's Parish, Louisiana where he worked as a peddler, selling staples to the people of the area, became quite successful, and wrote glowing letters back home to his family. Young Leon was impressed with the success of his older brother, and decided to join him in America when he was old enough. That time came when Leon was 15 years old; he sailed across the Atlantic and arrived in the port of New Orleans in February 1852.

Alexander met Leon and took him to his home in St. Landry's Parish. Alexander set up young Leon with a stock of merchandise, and Leon became a walking peddler, selling his few items from a pushcart. Many of the locals were of French ancestry so language was not a problem. Leon was a friendly lad. He learned the local customs, the names of people and was a quick success as a peddler. Soon he owned a horse, which made his work easier and expanded the area that he could cover. After only 18 months, Leon had been so successful that he formed a partnership with Felix Halff, whom he had known from childhood in France. Halff and Blum began general merchandising in Grand Coteau, St. Landry's Parish, and were very successful. Leon lasted 18 months in the partnership with Halff, and parted ways with him, not because of any personal disagreement, but in order to join his older brother.

Meanwhile, Alexander Blum had moved to Texas, where he set up a merchandising business in the town of Richmond. Through Alexander's enterprise and experience, he became the leading merchant at that time in

the thriving town of Richmond. When Leon Blum parted company with Felix Halff, he did so to move to Richmond, Texas and join the company his older brother had founded there. Leon worked in his brother's merchandise store as a clerk, where he excelled, and after a few years in that position, his brother brought him in as a partner. The firm then took the name of A. Blum & Bro.

By 1858 the firm of A. Blum & Brother opened a retail merchandise store in Galveston, Texas, then a booming port. Their store was in a frame building at the southeast corner of Avenue D and Tremont Streets. Alexander took charge of the Galveston store, leaving Leon in charge of the Richmond store. About 1860, the brothers decided to close the Richmond store, and consolidate their efforts in the more profitable Galveston store. Their business there was booming, with expanding markets, when the Civil War broke out. The economic downturn that accompanied the Civil War, forced the brothers to sell out their stock, and remove their business and selves to the south Texas town of Brownsville, just across the river from Mexico. In Brownsville, the two brothers opened a business, buying cotton (the cash crop in Texas at the time) and selling the cotton for export through the Mexican town of Matamoras, to merchants in Britain and Europe. They also sold staple goods as regular merchants and blended the two businesses. When Yankee troops landed at Bagdad, Texas and started to move on the town of Brownsville, the Blum brothers heard of this and moved their business across the river into Matamoras. About this time, two cousins Hyman and Joseph Blum and Leon's brother Sylvain Blum joined the business. About 1863 the business name was changed to H. Blum & Co. Leon Blum married a Miss Henrietta Levy of Corpus Christi, Texas in 1862. The couple had two children.

By the fall of 1865, with the closing of hostilities of the Civil War, brothers Leon and Sylvain returned their business to the port of Galveston, Texas. The times were changing, and the way business was conducted had changed. This time the brothers saw the future as wholesalers, rather than retailers; also including the lessons they had learned selling cotton for export to Europe, they formed a large wholesale grocer and cotton business. The economy of the South was in full recession following the civil war, and federal troops and carpet baggers where everywhere in the port city. The Blum brothers survived the economic downturn, even making money, due to their business savvy. By 1865 the business was called L. & H. Blum, and did \$150,000 worth of business. This increased to over one million dollars of business by 1870. The brothers motto was: "quick sales and small profits", and it seemed to work.

In 1869, Alexander Blum moved to New York and opened a wholesale

business there. Eventually they had offices in New York City, Boston, and Paris, France as well as the headquarters in Galveston, Texas. The Paris, France office was on the Boulevard Haussman. By 1887, the company of Leon & H. Blum employed 125 clerks and 30 traveling salesmen. Three family members who were buyers for the company died in 1870 on the steamship "Varuna"; they were Leon's cousins Hyman Blum, Joseph Blum and C. Blum (possibly another cousin). They were returning from a buying trip to New York when the ship was lost. Despite this tragic loss, the business continued to flourish, and in 1870, Alexander and Leon built a new warehouse in Galveston at the northeast corner of Strand and Twenty-second Streets. This building lasted only 7 years before it was burnt to the ground in 1877. When he learned of the burning of the building, Leon Blum set about to acquire new warehouse space and to buy up the merchandise he would need to serve his customers, leaving the burnt building and contents in the hands of insurance adjusters. He was evidently unflappable. A new fireproof brick Blum Building was built in 1879, which occupied 90,000 square feet in what is now the Strand Historical district of Galveston, Texas. The architect for this massive block long building was Eugene T. Heiner, who also designed the Houston Cotton Exchange and Galveston's Stewart Title Buildings. Famed Galveston architect Nicholas J. Clayton also had a hand in the design. The new Blum Building featured two hydraulic elevators, offices finished in cypress, and light entering the building on three sides. Some of the Blum brothers competitors in the wholesale business in Galveston at the time were Kauffman and Runge, both German immigrants. Wholesale dry goods merchants dealt mainly in staple and fancy dry goods, liquors, woodenware, hats, boots, shoes, and notions.

The eldest brother Alexander returned to Europe in retirement, sometime prior to 1878, leaving Leon as the managing partner of the business. Leon was also involved in many civic activities and other business pursuits. In 1874 he had a role in the organization of the (Galveston) Peoples' Street Railway, and was president of that company until it merged with the City Street Railway. Leon was instrumental in the construction of the famed Tremont Hotel of Galveston, which in it's heyday hosted six presidents, Sam Houston and Buffalo Bill Cody. The Galveston Cotton Exchange Building (1877-78) also was a result of his backing.

Mr. & Mrs. Leon Blum lived on Broadway Street in Galveston in a large elegant mansion. Mrs. Blum died in 1876. Leon Blum's business "Leon & H. Blum" was a stockholder in the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe Railway, and the Texas town of Blum (in the Hill county) which is on the railway, is named for him. The firm of Leon & H. Blum finally failed in the financial panics of the 1890s, and subsequent efforts to revive the firm

failed. The company stock and assets were sold to the Mistrot brothers in 1896, and the enterprise closed in 1908.

The 1879 Blum Building in the Strand district of Galveston was used for over 40 years as the home of the Galveston Tribune newspaper. In 1984, the Renaissance style structure with a block long arcade and stately masonry piers was restored by Houston's Mitchell Energy and Development Company, as the (*new*) Tremont Hotel, named after Galveston's original Tremont Hotel. The new hotel, carved from the old dry goods warehouse, contains 120 rooms, a four story skylight topped atrium, guest rooms with French doors opening onto ornate cast iron balconies, and an antique bar. The architect for the 1984 restoration was Ford, Powell & Carson of San Antonio.

Leon Blum was also the president of the Blum Land Company, and he contributed to the Bayland Orphans' Home for Boys and to various other schools. Leon Blum died at Galveston, Texas on April 28, 1906 and is buried there in the Hebrew Cemetery.

The Leon & H. Blum /Galveston/Texas/ 50 token is made of round black vulcanite, 31mm diameter, circa 1870-1882. Estimated value \$450. Possibly used as a drayage token. H. Blum was Hyman Blum, Leon's cousin. Listed in the Second Supplement to the Trade Tokens of Texas by William Fowler and John Ribbe, TAMS Journal, 1984)



**LISTINGS:** The 1870 Texas Bradstreet lists L. & H. Blum as wholesale dry goods in Galveston. The 1876 Texas Bradstreet lists Leon & H. Blum as wholesale dry goods in Galveston; and the 1886 Dunn lists Leon & H. Blum, Imps. wholesale dry goods.

**SOURCES:** "History of the Island and the City of Galveston" by Charles W. Hayes "The Handbook of Texas" by the Texas State Historical Society. Various newspaper articles.

# STORY OF THE KIBBUTZ

by Sylvia Haffner

A Kibbutz or Kvutza, is a communal or collective village, governed by the general assembly of all its members. All property is collectively owned and work is organized on a collective basis. Members give their labor and in return receive housing, food, clothing and social services. There are central dining rooms, kitchens and stores, as well as social and cultural centers. There are communal kindergartens and children's quarters in some, in others, the children live at home with the parents where individual living quarters provide personal privacy. All of the money earned by a kibbutz or its members goes into a common treasury. The kibbutzniks (members) receive no wages, have no income or expenses of their own.

The kibbutzim are predominately agricultural, but many run sizable industrial enterprises, such as furniture, electronics, lumber, and ostrich farming etc. Kibbutzniks receive a week or two of vacation each year, in addition to all Jewish holidays. Every family receives pocket money for vacations and extra trips. Automobiles are owned by the kibbutz and available to the members. Everything is supplied by the kibbutz to its members by the use of Kibbutz Money or cash from the treasury in other cases. Kibbutz moneys are sometimes indicated for items such as soap, haircuts, toothpaste, razor blades, postage, concert and drama tickets, movies, etc. In some cases, kibbutz money is issued in a general form and "good for" anything. Funds are made available for wedding and honeymoon arrangements, support of needy parents, medical and dental care, etc. The trend was to issue more general tickets and less specific ones. Today in most cases, cash is now supplied.

The kibbutz education system takes a child through the age of sixteen to eighteen years of age. Whereas, free public education in Israel, at the time, was available only up to the of fourteen. A kibbutz graduate was thus among the best educated youths in Israel. The kibbutzim will also send a talented student to a special art or music school or to the university.

Besides the regular members of the kibbutz, there are usually students on a work-study program and persons on a trial basis who have made applications for membership. There are also volunteers who receive a minimal salary with room and board, visitors and in some cases guests who use the Kibbutz facilities.

# KIBBUTZ NIRIM

The kibbutz was founded in 1946, and belongs to the Kibbutz Artzi Hashomer Hatzair kibbutz movement. The founding members were educated in the 'Hashomer Hatzair' youth movement in Israel, and some were young olim (immigrants) who managed to arrive in Eretz-Yisrael at the end of World War II.

The area of the Western Negev in which the kibbutz settled is full of archeological evidence which indicates the existence of a flourishing Jewish settlement called Maon, from the 4th century C.E. The ruins of a large synagogue were found near the kibbutz, with a mosaic floor which was restored and is open to visitors. The mosaic pictures various animals, vines, pomegranates and Jewish symbols such as the Menorah, Shofar and others.

On Yom Kippur in 1946 - at the break of the Yom Kippur fast, trucks secretly rolled out to establish 11, new settlements throughout the Negev desert - one of which was Kibbutz Nirim. Life on the border frontier was exciting yet dangerous. The site (called Dangur) was the furthest western settlement, near the Arab populated Gaza coast: the border between Egypt and Mandatory Palestine, south-east to the Arab town of Rafiah.

This close proximity to the Egyptian border influenced the life and development of the kibbutz over the years. On the day of the declaration of the founding of the State of Israel - May 15, 1948, the Egyptian Army invaded. The first Israeli settlement to be attacked by tanks, planes and infantry, was Kibbutz Nirim. The kibbutz was heavily shelled by artillery - a new and terrible weapon in those times in Israel. All the buildings were destroyed and eight chaverim (members) were killed. The others found shelter in the underground dugouts and repelled the armored attack with only small arms fire. The Egyptian Army, despite its great superiority in men and weapons, retreated with heavy losses.

. After the attack, the life on the kibbutz was conducted for a whole year in underground shelters and bunkers. Heavy daily shelling became routine. The attack, and the death of eight young founders, some of whom were the last surviving sons of families who escaped the Holocaust in Europe, had influenced the character of Nirim to this very day. It is symbolic that on one of the walls which were left standing after the attack, a slogan left over from a May Day celebration remained standing. It read: Not the tank, but man will be victorious.

After the War of Independence the kibbutz moved some kilometers north to its present site, on the Gaza Strip border, opposite the Arab town of Khan Yunis. Security problems did not vanish, however. Other members

were killed by mines in the fields of the kibbutz. In 1955 the kibbutz was shelled again by Egyptian artillery from the Gaza Strip.

The western Negev has a comfortable, dry climate, however it lies on the 'drought line', the limit of appreciable rainfall. The central problem of agriculture here is the lack of water. As rainfall is erratic, dry years are common. Thus, agriculture is based on irrigation with water allotted from the Negev National Water Carrier. The kibbutz has built a reservoir in a nearby wadi attempting, by new techniques, to utilize flash-floods which sweep through the Negev into the sea in the winters.

Today Nirim has a large and developed agricultural economy, spread over 5,000 acres. It grows field crops (wheat, barley), partially irrigated and partially relying on rain - irrigated crops (cotton, potatoes, carrots); citrus and avocado orchards. There is a dairy with 200 milk cows, and chickens houses producing 400 tons of meat yearly. There is a sewing factory producing mainly children clothes and also 8 acres of hothouses growing flowers for export. Nirim participates in the regional agricultural enterprises, such as packing sheds, cold storage and marketing facilities. It also maintains, together with other Negev kibbutzim, a regional kibbutz high school: *Maaleh Habsor*. The school is comprehensive one, and offers both academic and vocational courses to the youth of the Negev kibbutzim from grade 7 to grade 12. There is also a regional primary school: *Nitzaney Eshkol*. The membership of the kibbutz has grown appreciably over the years. Groups of young people from Israel and South America joined the kibbutz and some of the young people born in Nirim have settled in the kibbutz after doing their army service.

Today, the population of Nirim numbers approximately 450: 224 members and candidates, 160 children and a *gareen* (settlement group), soldiers and parents. In the last ten years there has been a great change in Nirim's economy. Many members now have jobs outside the kibbutz, as managers, economists, psychologists, lecturers and more. New wings have opened, including partnership in a local paint factory, a programming research center, jewelry and graphic design studios, a diving school, and rifle range.

In 1968/9 Nirim issued paper chits for use within the Kibbutz. There are five valuations, 10 Agorot, 50 Agorot, One Lira, Five Lira and Ten Lira. They are printed in Hebrew using different paper colors for each denomination.



# THE STORY OF BEIT HASHITA



Beit Hashita, meaning “the home of the Acacia tree”, is located at the foot of the Gilboa Mountain in the eastern Jezreel Valley. The Book of Judges recounts how Gideon tested the loyalty of his fighters by bringing them to the Ma’ayan Harod Springs at the base of the Gilboa. There he chose 300 warriors, and with this army, defeated the Midianites. “They blew the 300 trumpets... and the army fled as far as Beit Hashita”. (Judges VI:22)

Kibbutz Beit Hashita was founded by members of a pioneering youth movement in 1928, twenty years before the establishment of the State of Israel. The collective spirit of such early pioneers resulted in the rapid development of an intensive agricultural sector in Israel, and so Beit Hashita got its start. In fact, Kibbutz youth and adults alike have consistently come together over the years to work for the common good in kibbutz endeavors.



For half-a-century, Beit Hashita has proven to be a dynamic communal society, constantly developing along with the State itself. Faced with circumstances that demanded simultaneous defense and development of the land, the people of Beit Hashita worked with the intuition and

determination necessary to turn a barren land into the finest agriculture in the Jezreel Valley. Today’s Beit Hashita is a strong agricultural/industrial based community that can quickly adapt in order to meet the challenges of modern times.

Even before the foundation of the State, planning began to develop a strong industrial sector that would both utilize and meet the needs of Israel’s ever-growing agricultural infrastructure. Beit Hashita’s first effort in this area was to meet the requirements of the Israeli farmer and his constantly changing needs. Thus, the BHC Mfg. Company was founded to

manufacture new farm implements that would meet the specific demands of the local farmer. The second factory established was to process agricultural produce grown locally on the Kibbutz and in the region. Today, one can buy the delicious pickled products of the Gilboa-Beit Hashita Olives factory all over the world!



Today, the population of the kibbutz is over 1300 people, including 600 members, 400 children, and a varying number of volunteer workers, residents, new immigrants and participants in long-term youth Programs. Work plays a central role in the life of all kibbutzim. The members of Beit Hashita work in a wide variety of occupations, including doctors, engineers, administrators, skilled craftsmen and agronomy. Many service oriented work branches provide the kibbutz a degree of a self-sufficiency, and a number of kibbutz based Cottage Industries allow more uniquely talented members to work in a wide range of specialized fields.

The dynamic child-care system developed on Israeli kibbutzim is recognized world wide, in fact, Beit Hashita's child-care program accepts many children from surrounding communities, allowing them to benefit from the kibbutz system as well. The continuing education of adult members of Beit Hashita has always been a fundamental part of kibbutz life. University study, adult education and enrichment courses, and specialized lectures and seminars are open to all members of the community. In recent years, a university education has become a standard "next step" for post army young adults on the kibbutz.

All members of Beit Hashita are covered by fully comprehensive health and dental care. Equally as important is the fact that members are ensured

an active, productive life as they grow older. Even after retirement age, members continue to work, transferring their energies to specially devised projects that offer fulfilling work to those in their "golden years".

In 1985, Beit Hashita began reaching out to the Jewish youth of North America with the Beit Hashita American Class program. The American Class allows tenth and eleventh graders from the United States and Canada to work, study and live within the unique community of Beit Hashita, for one academic year. American class members study each day at the regional kibbutz high school, along with young people from surrounding kibbutzim and other settlements. In the evening, they join their adopted families at home and take part in organized class or school activities. Beit Hashita, today, is a fully integrated society that has successfully combined agriculture and industry in a communal environment, building a healthy foundation for community life.

Kibbutz Hashita has issued chits valued from one lirot to 100 lirot. These were used for supermarket use, for small supply for the children's house, for sugar and sweets, haberdashery, telephone calls. The Bet Hashita Cultural Committee issued chits for plays, books and records. Various specimens are illustrated.

כרטיס חנוכיה  
בית השיטה

\* 01019 המחאה לועדות מ

ע"ס 50 לי

תאריך: \_\_\_\_\_

חשבונית: \_\_\_\_\_

חשבונית: \_\_\_\_\_

חשבונית: \_\_\_\_\_

חש

50	50	50	50	50	50	המחאה לועדות מ ע"ס 50 לי
25	25	25	25	25	25	
10	10	10	10	10	10	
10	10	10	10	10	10	
2	2	2	2	2	2	
3	3	3	3	3	3	6.-

חש \* 000983

1.-	1	1.-	1.-	1.-	כרטיס חנוכה - בית השיטה למחאה לעמותת קשר ע"ס 10 לי
50	50	50	50	50	
25	25	25	25	25	
10	10	10	10	10	
5	5	5	5	5	
3	3	3	3	3	10.-
2	2	2	2	2	
2	2	2	2	2	
2	2	2	2	2	
1.-	1	1	1	1	

תלושים לסיווג חודשים  
לשנת בית השיטה  
כ"ב

חש	ק"ג סוכר
4	1 ק"ג סוכר
5	1 ק"ג סוכר
4	1 ק"ג סוכר
1	1 ק"ג סוכר
2	1 ק"ג סוכר
1	1 ק"ג סוכר

## MOTHER OF THE CO-OPERATIVE VILLAGES

The second coin of the Hanukka series, issued by the Bank of Israel in 1960, was dedicated to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the settlement Deganya. The coin also commemorates the jubilee of Israel's collective agricultural movement. On the motif side Deganya is seen on the shore of Lake Kinneret, with a silhouette of cypress trees, palms and dwellings. In large Hebrew letters to the left is the name Degania. In a half circle around the upper rim, the words "Jubilee of Collective Settlement" are inscribed in Hebrew. The coins numerical value is 1 lira.



Deganya consists of two *kevuzot*—Deganya Alef and Deganya Bet that are located on the Jordan-Yarmuk Plain south of Lake Kinneret. Deganya Alef was founded in 1909 on land that was among the first holdings acquired by the Jewish National Fund. The idea came from seven pioneers of the Second Aliyah who were working as wage earners at the neighboring farm of Kinneret. They applied to Arthur Ruppin to farm a plot of land on their own responsibility. Ruppin decided to accord them a trial period on a part of the lands east of the Jordan named *Umm Juni*. Surprisingly, the experiment succeeded economically, although the group dispersed after a year. It was followed in 1911 by the "Haderah Commune" whose members were pioneers from Russia who worked out the principles of collective settlement and made Deganya the "Mother of the Kevuzot."

In the initial years, the *kevuzah* suffered from frequent attacks by Bedouin robbers encamped in the vicinity. After World War I, with the arrival of Third Aliyah immigrants, Deganya's intensified farming created a need for more hands, but they preferred to maintain the frame of the

small "family" *kevuzah*. The settlers ceded part of the land allocated to them for the establishment of another kevuzah, which was built in 1920 and named Deganya Bet. In time, the two settlements further intensified farming and recognized the need, both economic and social, to absorb more members, although they were able to give a part of their land for a third settlement, the kibbutz Afikim.

During the War of Independence (1948), the Syrian army, having taken neighboring Zemah, attempted to continue its advance across the Jordan westward. On May 20, 1948, it was repulsed by the vigorous defense of Deganya Alef. One of the Syrian tanks remained stuck in the settlement's perimeter and remained there as a memorial. In memory of its fallen members, Deganya laid out "*Gan ha-Meginnim*" ("The Defenders' Park").

In 1968 the two Deganyas had a combined population of 960. Both operate intensive, fully irrigated farming of field crops, bananas, out-of-season vegetables, fish ponds and livestock based on the hot climate and abundance of water in their region. Deganya Bet has a metal factory. The Bet Gordon Museum and Study Center for natural sciences and agriculture is located at Deganyah Alef. Levi Eshkol and Kadish Luz were members of Deganyah Bet. Arthur Ruppin, Otto Warburg, Leopold Greenberg, and other personalities are buried at Deganyah Alef, alongside A. D. Gordon, Joseph Busel, and other founders of the labor settlement movement. In 1981 Deganya Alef was awarded the Israel Prize for special contribution to Israel State and society. The name Deganya ("Cornflower") is based on the Arab designation of the land, *Umm Juni*, which in turn may have its origin in the village Kefar Gun of talmudic times.

In the mid-1990s the two kibbutzim had a combined population of some approximately 1,300.



# THE DANCING KIBBUTZ

Kibbutz Dalia was created by uniting two kibbutzim affiliated with "Hashomer Hatzair". The first kibbutz, "Bamaaleh", was comprised of members from Romania and Transilvania. Many of them finished training in agriculture and industry in their respective countries, and were later united as a group for immigration. The first immigrants arrived in Israel in 1933, and stayed mainly in Magdiel and in Malal Village in Hadar Ramatayim. They worked in agriculture and various other temporary jobs while waiting for permission from The Jewish Agency to settle permanently.

In addition to cultural and communal activities, the members were also intensively engaged in energetic political activities. The second kibbutz, "Bamifneh" in Karkur, was comprised of members from Germany. Before immigrating, most of them finished training in agriculture in Denmark, while others had studied in Germany, France and England. The first members immigrated in 1933, while other members arrived in "Bamifneh", the settlement, where they expected to lay the foundation of their new kibbutz. In "Bamifneh" the members worked in agriculture, mainly tending vegetable gardens in the area, about 40 dunams, along with construction work at Gan Hashomron and portorage in Haifa Port.

In the settlement, cultural and communal activities were vigorous. Once a month, they went to see movies or a theater performance, and every three weeks they went on foot to Kibbutz Ein-Shemer to listen to political lectures. The decision to unify these two kibbutzim was made in the Secretariat of Kibbutz Hashomer Hatzair on 26th April, 1939. Several days later, on the 1st of May, the two kibbutzim settled in Ramat Menashe to build an independent kibbutz of their own. Thus, the dreams of their youth and the national pioneering task in Israel were realized.

Kibbutz Dalia was founded in the last wave of the Movement called "Wall and Tower". In the beginning, members set up their tents in "Migdal", a temporary camp which was eventually changed for living quarters called "Migdalia". In the summer of 1940, the construction of a permanent settlement was begun near Daliat-El-Ruha, an Arab village whose inhabitants, compensated by the Jewish National Fund through "Tzur" company, had left prior to the members' arrival. A single fig tree stood in the settlement area, and on the surrounding hillsides lay only a wilderness of stones.

In the Kibbutz, there were 160 members and 14 children. The soil allotted to the Kibbutz was poor, shallow, and thickly covered with stone. The only water source was the spring in Daliat-El-Ruha, which supplied 3

cubic meters of water per hour. Most of the land was spread across steep slopes and was not suitable for farming. Members were mainly occupied with preparing the soil through stone-removal, of forestation, and planting vegetable gardens. Experts maintained that there was little hope of a future in agriculture for this area. Despite the hardships of life and the negative opinion of experts, members did not lose hope. They held fast to the homeland, with love, hoes, and pickaxes. In defiance of the rugged landscape they looked for alternative kind of work and proceeded to develop a blacksmith's shop, "a soaping kettle", and the craft shops which had already been started in the earlier temporary settlements. From the blacksmith's shop developed "Arad", a factory for water meters, and from "the soaping kettle" came the "Zohar", factory for soap and detergents. Without realizing it, the members of Kibbutz Dalia had become pioneers in kibbutz-industry. The hard life of the early years, combined with these successes, created a strong bond with the land, together with hope for a better future.

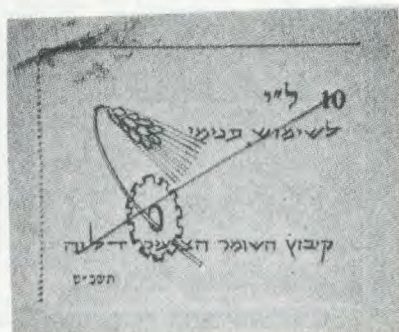
From the beginning, the Kibbutz successfully solved the problems of social integration. Differences in origin and culture of the two groups forced the new kibbutz to find ways of suitable cooperation in order to achieve full partnership. In the fields, efforts in soil preparation continued. After every ploughing, removal of stones was carried out repeatedly. Over 600 dunam of forests were planted with pine, cypress, and carob. Likewise new agricultural branches were established; crops, orchards - apples, plums, olives, and wine grapes, flocks of sheep, a dairy for milking, poultry, and beehives. However, there was not enough water for the whole area, so that the kibbutz had an insufficient supply and continued its struggle for existence.

Cultural and communal activities flourished, however, even in these hard conditions. The first festival of folk-dancing was held at the "Khan" on the very soil of the kibbutz, during the Harvest festival (Hag Habikurim). The Book of Ruth (Megilat Ruth) was the theme of the festival, and residents of the various settlements in this region took part. Three years later, in 1947, the second dance festival was held in the natural amphitheater beside the kibbutz. At this festival, several hundred dancers participated, watched by some ten thousand people from all over the country.

1950 will always be remembered as a turning point, not only in the development of the Kibbutz, but also in the region as a whole. It was at this time that the appearance of the area changed completely. The National Water Source Company drilled for water near the amphitheater for the dance festival, and from a depth of 374 meters, a powerful stream of water

burst forth, supplying 300 cube per hour. After this success, additional drills followed, supplying the precious liquid to Dalia and the settlements in the area. This water is still used today to improve the quality of the water from the National Water Supply System which passes near the kibbutz. Water has brought about an essential change in the character of the agriculture and outlook of the settlement. Lawns, gardens and groves were planted, and the bare land was gradually covered by veils of greenery. Industrial factories were also established and consolidated, supplying the members with a variety of work. In 1950, "Harei Efraim", the regional educational institute, was also established near Kibbutz En-Hashofet, as a common school for kibbutzim in the region. It was here that the first sons and daughters from the "Zamir" group were educated.

Kibbutz Dalia issued a system of chits to its members which could be used for many purposes. Some are designated for supermarket necessities, others for internal use or for the consumption budget. These were denominated from 10 Agorot to 50 Lira. They also issued chits good for one performance, which shows a sketch of a stage.



## A Russian-Jewish Artist

Isaac Israelevich Brodsky, a Jewish Russian artist, was born in 1884 in St. Petersburg where he lived most of his life. From an early age it was evident that he had an extraordinary talent in drawing, and despite his religion he was allowed to study in Odessa at the School of Fine Arts and later was allowed to enroll at the Soviet Academy of Fine Arts. His works were widely reproduced. Never really a representative of the official Soviet "socialist realist" school of art, Brodsky would have been called, in the Western world, a "magical realist."

In his portrait of Lenin, for instance, Brodsky's sobriety in his choice and treatment of significant detail suggests an interest in early Flemish Academy. It should be noted that at that time, Jews in Russia were ordinarily not permitted to live outside the Pale of Settlement.

Although he was influenced at first by the modernist trends represented in Odessa mainly by Alexander Exter, Brodsky soon distinguished himself as a virtuoso realist. Under the Soviet regime, he became Russia's most successful portrait painter. His portraits of Lenin at the Smolny Institute and of other popular and Dutch art rather than in the application of socialist realist principles. His works thus stand the test of time much better than those of other Soviet artists who, later in the Stalinist era, conformed more strictly to orthodox standards. Nearly all Brodsky's major works are in Soviet museums, especially in Moscow's Tretyakovskaya Gallery. Brodsky died in 1930. The illustrated three inch bronze medal was dedicated to this Russian-Jewish artist



## **A NUMISMATIC RECORD OF RASHID AL-DIN**

Alexander Van Zandt Akin

*"This is the head of the Jew who abused the name of God; may God's curse be upon him!"* Early in the summer of 1318, the streets of Tabriz rang with this chant as a mob carrying the severed head of Rashid al-Din ransacked the city quarter he had once constructed.

The son of a Jewish apothecary from Hamadan, Rashid al-Din had become a powerful vizier in the Mongol government of Iran, and composed the most complete history of the Mongols ever written. But when the sultan Uljaitu died and his young son Abu Sa'id took the throne, the adolescent monarch became a puppet in the hands of manipulative advisors who accused the vizier of poisoning his father. Thus the trusted advisor of three Mongol kings fell from stratospheric social heights to the indignity of public execution.

Born in 1247, Rashid al-Din at-Tabib Fadl Allah studied medicine and established his reputation as a physician in the midst of a new era in Iran. The successors of Chingiz (Genghis) Khan had conquered Persia in a chaotic fashion, but their occupation gradually coalesced into a stable regime as Hulagu, a grandson of Chingiz Khan, wiped out resistant groups like the Isma'ili *Hashishin* (Assassins). The new rulers were called Il-Khans, "Deputy Khans," who ostensibly served as mere officers of the Great Khan to the East.

One of the most significant reforms of the Ilkhanid government was to disregard the laws that had long banned non-Muslims from high positions in government. As most of Asia had fallen under Mongol dominion, a "*Pax Mongolica*" enabled travelers to move freely between formerly hostile territories. Thus there was an unprecedented exchange of culture and people from all corners of Mongol-ruled territory. The Mongol rulers were willing to hire administrators based on skills and connections, often regardless of religion or ethnicity. In this environment Rashid befriended Indians, Chinese and even a Catholic monk from Europe who were all working in the capital.

At the age of 30 Rashid publicly converted from Judaism to Islam. It is difficult for us to know today whether he did so as a matter of personal conviction or to ease his acceptance in non-Mongol circles of Iranian society. He wrote a number of studies of Islamic thought, none of which were very novel, which has led some researchers to believe that Rashid's primary motive in composing them was to prove his respectability as an orthodox Muslim. However, his status as a former Jew was never forgotten.

After Rashid's reputation as a physician and a legal theorist of the Shafi'i school was well established, he secured the rank of Vizier, or minister of state, under the Ilkhan Abaqa, who ruled from Hulagu's death in 1265 to 1282. In 1295, Ghazan Mahmud took the throne and promoted Rashid to the highest rank of vizier, a rank shared by only one other official. Ghazan Mahmud also gave Rashid his most monumental literary assignment: to compose a history of the Mongol conquest and an encyclopedia of world history. Rashid had unfettered access to state funds and the right to request copies of any known historical work, except for one, the Mongols' own secret court record. However, Rashid was allowed to interview a Mongol authority who had the right to read that document, so much of its information was incorporated into his own work. Thus was the *Jami-ut-Tavarikh* composed, which to this day serves as the most complete contemporary historical source on the Mongols, particularly their regime in Persia.

Rashid had a hand in Ghazan Mahmud's numerous fiscal and administrative reforms, which fundamentally changed the nature of Mongol rule. Ghazan Mahmud still paid tribute in words to the Mongol Great Khan, but for practical purposes the Ilkhanate was now independent and took on many aspects of a Persian government. Its purpose of governance was no longer solely to extract wealth from the populace but rather to support a rational economy and stabilize popular cultural institutions.

Rashid directed government funds to the establishment of numerous schools, mosques, and public works at various cities, but most notably on the outskirts of Tabriz. It was here that he built the Shahrستان Rashidi (Rashid's Township), also known as the Rab'e-Rashidi (Rashid's Quarter), a complex that included Iran's first university as well as a hospital for which Rashid ordered 100 elaborate medicinal syrup jars custom-made in China and imported at personal expense.

While the earlier Mongol conquerors had been Buddhists, Nestorian Christians or followers of an indigenous Mongol religion, by the time of Ghazan Mahmud the Ilkhanid administration had become Muslim. The earlier tolerance for different religions gradually faded, especially under Ghazan Mahmud's successor, Uljaitu, who became Ilkhan in 1304 and forcefully persecuted non-Muslims. Uljaitu had probably grown up knowing Rashid as a close associate of his father; he trusted the vizier as a Muslim scholar and even converted to the Shafi'i school of thought after Rashid's persuasion. However, other officials in the Ilkhanid government were resentful of Rashid's extraordinary power and wealth, and suspicious of his

Jewish background. On several occasions rumors of disloyalty or financial chicanery circulated about Rashid, but Uljaitu managed to protect him. Rashid's main opponent was his co-vizier, a man named Tadj al-Din. An intense personal rivalry between the two forced Uljaitu to divide his realm into two zones of control so the men need not interact as they managed their own political territories.

When Uljaitu fell ill and died in 1316 his son Abu Sa'id took the throne. His youth made him especially susceptible to the influence of advisors. Deeply ingrained prejudice against the Jews helped spur rumors among the general populace that Rashid had used his medical knowledge to poison Uljaitu, rumors that were fanned by Tadj al-Din and artfully presented to the new Ilkhan, who then ordered the former vizier executed. Shahrستان al-Rashidi was looted, its library vandalized, and Rashid's head paraded in the streets.

The reprise to this story, and the twist that makes it relevant to a numismatic journal, is that Abu Sa'id later understood the deception to which he had been subjected and regretted the death of the man who had loyally served his father and grandfather. Rashid's son Ghiyath al-Din was made Vizier (another son, Ibrahim, had been killed together with his father). The district Rashid had built was renovated, and a mint was established there. The coins struck at the mint bear the inscription "Shahrستان Rashidi," "Rashid's Township."

There were three coins types issued at Shahrستان Rashidi under Abu Sa'id: two different types of silver double dirham, and a series of copper coins. The only type this author has seen in person is the silver variety illustrated here (examples of the others are held at the University of Tübingen in Germany, having formerly comprised part of the Stephen Album collection). This coin's inscriptions are all in Arabic but for the ruler's name, which is written in Mongolian using Uyghur script, an alphabet derived from Syriac. The date is given according to the Khaniya system, which was briefly used as an official calendar for the Ilkhanid state but soon abandoned. The date on the illustrated example is 33 al-Khaniya, equivalent to 1333-1334 CE. The year 34 al-Khaniya is also known.





The pattern on the left is formed by the fancy intertwining of these Arabic words: "*There is no God but God, Muhammad is the Messenger of God, may God Bless Him.*" Around this are the names of the first four caliphs, Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman, and 'Ali. The other side gives the ruler's titles as "*The Just Sultan of the World,*" followed by his name in Mongolian in the center line, followed by the epithet "*Valiant Khan, (may) his reign be prolonged.*" In between these three lines of horizontal inscription are inserted the two words of the mint name: "*Shahristan Rashidi.*" Around the outside, with the first segment missing at the top on this example, is the inscription "*Struck in the year three and thirty al-Khaniya.*"

The mint at Shahristan Rashidi appears to have closed after Abu Sa'id's reign, and the area lost its luster as the Ilkhanid realm was split apart by civil war. In 1399 CE, after Timur (Tamerlane) had conquered the region, Rashid al-Din's bones were exhumed and reburied in a Jewish cemetery.

## Resources

Some of Rashid al-Din's works have been translated into English; the most important is John Boyle's *The Successors of Genghis Khan*, published in 1971, which covers the development of the Mongol Empire after the death of its founder. Boyle's introduction contains a great deal of useful biographical information as well.

The Cambridge History of Iran, published by Cambridge University Press, covers the Saljuq and Mongol periods in volume 5 (edited by Boyle) and is also quite useful for understanding Rashid al-Din's life and the context in which he worked. There are also short but informative articles about him in both Encyclopedia Judaica and the Encyclopedia of Islam.

# ALEXANDRIA & THE JEWS

Jews settled in Alexandria at the beginning of the third century B.C.E. (according to Josephus, already in the time of Alexander the Great). At first they dwelt in the eastern sector of the city, near the sea. During the Roman era, two of its five quarters were inhabited by Jews, and synagogues existed in every part of the city. The Jews of Alexandria engaged in various crafts and in commerce. They included some who were extremely wealthy moneylenders and merchants, but the majority were artisans. From the legal aspect, the Jews formed an autonomous community at whose head stood at first its respected leaders, afterward—the ethnarchs, and from the days of Augustus, a council of 71 elders. Many of the Jews even acquired citizenship in the city.

The position of the Jews deteriorated at the beginning of the Roman era. Rome sought to distinguish between the Greeks, the citizens of the city to whom all rights were granted, and the Egyptians, upon whom a poll tax was imposed and were considered a subject people. The Jews energetically began to seek citizenship rights, for only thus could they attain to the status of the privileged Greeks. Meanwhile, however, anti-Semitism had taken deep root. The Alexandrians vehemently opposed the entry of Jews into the ranks of the citizens. In 38 C.E., during the reign of Caligula, serious riots broke out against the Jews. Although anti-Semitic propaganda had paved the way for them, the riots themselves became possible as a result of the attitude of the Roman governor, Flaccus. Many Jews were murdered, their notables were publicly scourged, synagogues were defiled and closed, and all the Jews were confined to one quarter of the city. On Caligula's death, the Jews armed themselves and after receiving support from their fellow Jews in Egypt and Erez Israel fell upon the Greeks. The revolt was suppressed by the Romans. The emperor Claudius restored to the Jews of Alexandria the religious and national rights of which they had been deprived at the time of the riots, but forbade them to claim any extension of their citizenship rights. In 66 C.E., influenced by the outbreak of the war in Erez Israel, the Jews of Alexandria rebelled against Rome. The revolt was crushed by Tiberius Julius Alexander and 50,000 Jews were killed (Jos., Wars, 2:497). During the widespread rebellion of Jews in the Roman Empire in 115–117 C.E. Jews of Alexandria again suffered, the great synagogue going up in flames. As a consequence of these revolts, the economic situation of the community was undermined and its population diminished.

According to Arabic sources, there were about 40,000 Jews in Alexandria at the time of its conquest by the Arabs (642), but 70,000 had left during the siege. These figures are certainly exaggerated, but they

indicate that in the seventh century there was still a large Jewish community. Under the rule of the caliphs the community declined, both demographically and culturally. In any case, throughout the Middle Ages there was a well-organized Jewish community there with rabbis and scholars. In this period the community of Alexandria maintained close relations with the Jews of Cairo and other cities of Egypt, to whom they applied frequently for help in ransoming Jews captured by pirates. Medieval sources mention two synagogues of Alexandria, one of them called "small." The Jews of Alexandria were engaged in the international trade centered in their city, and some of them held government posts.

In 1700 Jewish fishermen from Rosetta moved to Alexandria and formed a Jewish quarter near the seashore, and in the second half of the 18th century more groups of fishermen joined them. This Jewish quarter however, was destroyed by an earthquake. At the end of the 18th century the community was very small and it suffered greatly during the French conquest. Napoleon imposed heavy fines on the Jews and ordered the ancient synagogue, associated with the prophet Elijah, to be destroyed. In the first half of the 19th century under the rule of Muhammad Ali there was a new period of prosperity. The development of commerce brought great wealth to the Jews, as to the other merchants in the town.

During World War I many Jews from Palestine who were not Ottoman citizens were exiled to Alexandria. In 1915 their leaders decided, under the influence of Jabotinsky and Trumpeldor, to form Jewish battalions to fight on the side of the Allies. The Zion Mule Corps was also organized in Alexandria.

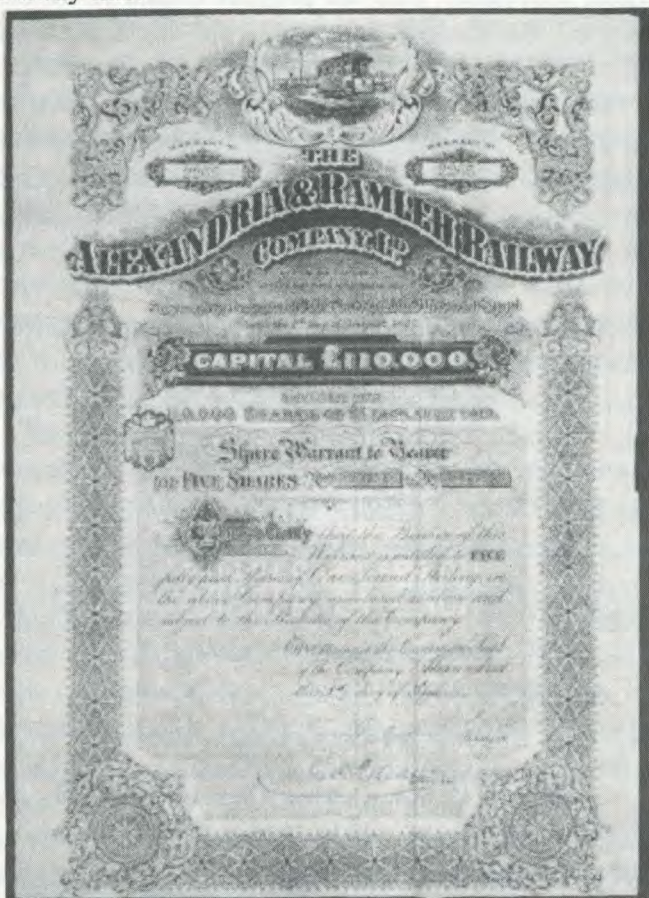
In 1937, 24,690 Jews were living in Alexandria and in 1947, 21,128. The latter figure included 243 Karaites, who, unlike those of Cairo, were members of the Jewish community council. Ashkenazi Jews were also members of the council. According to the 1947 census, 59.1% of Alexandrian Jews were merchants, and 18.5% were artisans. Upon the outbreak of the Israel War of Independence in 1948, several Jews were placed in detention camps. Most of the detainees were released before 1950. There were several assaults on the Jewish community by the local population, including the throwing of a bomb into a synagogue in July 1951. With Nasser's accession to power in February 1954, many Jews were arrested on charges of Zionism, communism, and currency smuggling. After the Sinai Campaign (1956), thousands of Jews were banished from the city, while others left voluntarily when the Alexandrian stock exchange ceased to function. The 1960 census showed that only 2,760 Jews remained. After the Six-Day War of June 1967, about 350 Jews, including Chief Rabbi Nafusi, were interned in the Abu Za'bal detention camp, known for its severe conditions. Some of them were

released before the end of 1967. The numbers dwindled rapidly and by 1970 very few remained.

About twenty five years ago, the A.I.N.A. study tour to Israel offered an Egypt excursion as an option. Your editor recalls being on the first direct flight from Tel-Aviv to Egypt as all previous flights had to go VIA Greece or Turkey. Then A.I.N.A. president Morris Bram and his wife Lena tried unsuccessfully to find Lena's birth records as she was born in Alexandria.

The numismatic illustration is of a bearer warrant certificate issued in 1903 in the amount of five shares valued at 1£ Sterling each in the Alexandria and Ramleh Railway Company. The certificate is listed as lot #14 in a British scripophily auction by Michael Vessid and had a minimum start bid of LL £45 - approximately \$68.-

There is no connection with the Israel city of Ramleh. The Ramleh on this certificate is the Ramleh Station in Alexandria, and the railroad is essentially a trolley line.



# **CLUB** **BULLETIN**

**DONNA J. SIMS N.L.C.**

*Editor*

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**INS of LONG ISLAND** - Members were encouraged to bring with them to the November meeting to share any items relating to Israel or Judaica coins, medals and currency. INSLI meets the third Thursday of the month at the Syosset Library beginning at 7:30 p.m. (So. Oyster Bay Road and Exit 43 on the long Island Expressway).

**INS / ICC of LOS ANGELES** - A very special video program was shown at the October meeting on the Jewish Brigade entitled "In Our Own Hands". This video was sent for the program by the graciousness of Jack Schwartz of the INS of Michigan. The Jewish Brigade was the only military unit to serve in WWII in the British Army, and in fact, in all the Allied forces, as an independent, national Jewish military formation. The Brigade was comprised mainly of Jews from Eretz Israel and had its own emblem. The establishment of the Brigade was the final outcome of prolonged efforts by the Yishuv and the Zionist Movement to achieve recognized participation and representation of the Jewish people in the war against Nazi Germany. Sagi Solomon brought to display his extensive collection of Jewish Brigade items to compliment the program. (Anyone else interested in this video to be shown for their meeting program, please let me know.)

**INS of MICHIGAN** - For the first get-together following the summer hiatus, members enjoyed a brunch at O'Mara's in Berkeley. A joint meeting with the Israel Stamp Club was held at the October meeting. Arnold Shay spoke on his newly acquired unique collection of stamps and other items from Litmannstadt and Theresienstadt.

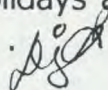
**INS of NEW YORK** - For the October meeting the study topics were: the letter "U"; topic - flower; and calendar items - Sukkot and Columbus Day.

**BUY / SELL/ TRADE:** To sell: a variety of coins and medals, including the Menorah in proof and CM59 Maariv 25<sup>th</sup> Ann. meal in silver (Oct-CM1).

**MY FRIEND MOE:** My personal condolences to the family and friends of my friend Moe. For over 30 years I would hear from Moe on a regular basis, many times on my answering machine, to see how things were going on the West Coast, how the clubs were doing and to pass on his regards to many of his California friends. When I received the message from his son that he had passed away, I was stunned and saddened. AINA has lost another great leader and we will all feel this loss in one way or another. Goodbye dear friend. . . .

**MOMENTS IN THOUGHT:** Every time I close the door on reality it comes in through the windows. . . . I try to take one day at a time but sometimes several days attack me at the same time. . . . (author unknown).

**COMMENTS FROM DJS:** It has been nice to hear from several members and yes, my correspondence is up-to-date. I do wish one and all the happiest of holidays and best wishes for the new year. Be well, be happy. . . .



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*Rabbi Nachman* of Breslau, the famous Chasidic Rabbi, used to say that there is nothing in the world without a melody. One can also say there is nobody who is not moved by any particular melody. Music which is the most abstract form of art, has the greatest power of penetrating one's heart and soul. Music and song are mentioned many times in the Bible. Divine inspiration was transmitted through music. The Levites played the trumpets, David the lyre. The Prophets who came towards Saul played the lute, timbrel, pipe and lyre.

The deep-rooted musical heritage is evident in Israel today, covering a complete spectrum from classical music to Jewish folk music. Israel is the home of many of the world's leading classical musicians and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra is world-famous.

	value	metal		diameter	weight
Coin	NIS 10	Gold/917	22k	30mm	16.96g
Specifications	NIS 2	silver/925	Proof	38.7mm	28.8g
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